

Revival in the Alps

WORLD TITLE challenger Viktor Korchnoi's dramatic come-back in the sixth game against Anatoly Karpov came just when everybody had written him off. Even his own camp barely concealed the dispiritment felt after the 50-year-old Soviet defector's listless display over the first five games. Karpov led by three wins to nil in the hunt for six wins, and the correspondents were flocking out in droves.

They must have been tempted to hijack their planes back to Merano when the news of Korchnoi's dynamic display in game six came through.

The loss was only Karpov's second with the White pieces in 68 official games with his bitter rival. The other was during their gruelling 32-game 1978 match in the Philippines when the Russian number one narrowly retained his title by six wins to five.

Even so Korchnoi himself was not completely satisfied. One of his seconds, American Grandmaster Yasser Seirawan, said: "Viktor was not happy with the game. He thought he [Viktor] did not get a good opening. And then Karpov's blunder on the 40th move made it all look too easy." Not that this mattered a bit to the numerous and suddenly ecstatic Soviet dissidents and emigres who had descended on the little Tyrolean town in the Alps.

Score up to nine games:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Karpov	1	1	½	1	½	0	½	½	1
Korchnoi	0	0	½	0	½	1	½	½	0

Here is game six.

RUY LOPEZ

A. KARPOV	V. KORCHNOI
1. e4	e5
2. Nf3	Nc6
3. Bb5	a6
4. Ba4	Nf6
5. 0-0	Nxe4

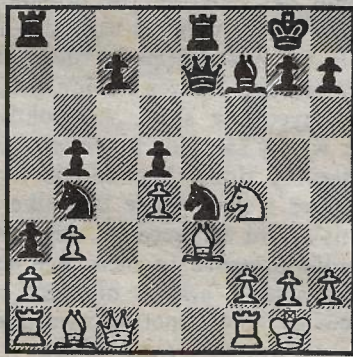
The first Open Lopez of this match, although it was seen repeatedly in the 1978 match:

6. d4	b5
7. Bb3	d5
8. dxe5	Be6
9. c3	Bc5
10. Nbd2	0-0
11. Bc2	Bf5
12. Nb3	Bg6
13. Nfd4	Bxd4
14. cxd4	a5
15. Be3	a4
16. Nc1	a3

Instead a game Vojtkovic v Sideif-Zade, USSR 1981, went 16...f6 17.f3 fxe5 offering a piece sacrifice: after 18.fxe4 Rxf1 ch followed by ...exd4 the position is at least equal for Black. Korchnoi's interpolation of 16...a3 17.b3 makes this course even less viable for White and Karpov spent little time in rejecting 18.f3.

17. b3	f6
18. exf6	Qxf6
19. Ne2	Nb4
20. Bb1	Qe7
21. Qe1	Rfe8
22. Nf4	Bf7
23. Qc1	

After both players' brisk pace in the opening phase, Korchnoi was the first to lapse into really deep thought. Black's a-pawn is deep inside the enemy half, and his pieces are reasonably developed. But he has potential problems with his queenside pawns in general: they are somewhat weak, and the backward c-pawn is open to attack.



23. ... c5!

The classic Open Lopez break. In this instance it entails a bold pawn sacrifice.

24. dxc5	Qf6
25. Bxe4	Rxe4
26. Ne2	d4
27. Ng3	Ree8
28. Qd2!	Nc6!

A cool retreat — on 28...dxe3 29.fxe3! and Black's queen and knight are both attacked.

29. Bg5	Qe5
30. Rac1	d3
31. Rfd1	Bg6

Chances are roughly balanced. Black's passed pawn on d3 is more dangerous than its White counterpart on c5, but it must be remembered that Karpov's pawn is an extra one.

Another factor was also beginning to influence the play from this point — Korchnoi's habitual time-trouble.

32. Be3	Re6
33. Bf4	Qf6
34. Re1	Rae8
35. Rxe6	Rxe6
36. Rb1	h5
37. h3	h4
38. Bg5	Qd4
39. Be3	Qd5?

An inaccuracy — which wins the game!

40. Nf1??

With 35 minutes remaining on his clock, Karpov made this losing blunder instantly. The watching Soviet delegation gasped in dismay. White would stand better after the correct 40.Ne2! (heading for f4), as the Black d-pawn is pinned.

40. ... Be4

Very strong — now 41.f3 Bxf3! 42.gxf3 Ne5 43.Nh2 Nxf3 ch 44.Nxf3 Qxf3 45.Qf2 Qxh3! and the threat of 46...Rg6 ch is a killer.

41. Bf4 Bxg2

Taking no chances, Korchnoi sealed this move. But Karpov did not even wait to see it the next day, and resigned without resuming. With his kingside pawn formation smashed the champion's position is quite hopeless, eg 42.Ne3 Qf3 43.Nxg2 Re2.

42. Resigns

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